CHAPTER I.

ACCESSION AND EARLY YEARS.

EARLY LIFE:

Prince Roshan Akhtar, who now ascended the throne on 15th Zil Qada, 1131 A.H. (28th September, 1719) under the title of Abdul Path Nasiruddin Muhammad Shah Shani, was the son of Prince Jahan Shah, son of Shah Alam Bakshur Shah, son of Aurangzeb. His mother's name was Nawab Qudsia Fakhrul Nisa Begum officially known as Hazrat Begum. He was born at Ghazni on Friday, 23rd Rabi I, 1114 A.H. (16th August, 1709) and now in the 18th (Lunar) year. The Prince remained in prison with his mother from the beginning of Jahandar Shah's reign till he was elevated to the throne. Contemporary records are silent about his early life. He had, however, received the conventional education, for we find him later on practising archery, riding and indulging in music and other polite arts.

Accession:

After the death of Rafi-ud-Daulah, the Sayyid brothers sent Ghulam Ali Khan, son of Sayyid Khan Jahan, their maternal uncle, escorted by 500 horse, from Akbarabad, to Delhi with a Parchan to Muhammad Yar Khan, the custodian of the fort, instructing

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1. Ashob, p. 61.
3. K.H. p. 310. He gives the date as 11th Zil Qada.
4. T.I. p. 196. His date is 22nd Rabi I, 1114 A.H.
7. Jan-i-Jan - According to his 17th Zil Qada 1381 A.H. was the date.
8. Ashob, p. 68.
10. His younger brother, Farkhand-Akhtar, most beautiful and brave already killed, his another brother Zokail Shah was with him in the prison. Ashob, p. 69.
him to take out Sultan Ibrahim, son of Rafi-ust-Shan, and hand him over to the envoy. But as chance would have it, the Custodian without identifying the prince handed over Prince Roshan Akhtar to Chulam Ali. When the party reached Agra, the brothers, guided by the dictates of expediency, accepted the accidental choice and gave the prince the title of Muhammad Shah. The ceremony of enthronement took place at Bidyapur on the 15th Zil Qada 1131 A.H. (28th September, 1719) and Roshan Akhtar was proclaimed as Emperor. Coins were struck and Khutba read in his name. It was directed that the commencement of the reign should be fixed from the time of the removal of Farrukh-Siyar from the throne. The two brothers offered presents and paid homage to Muhammad Shah.

   K.K. p. 240
   According to Ashoh (p.7) Chulam Ali Khan had been sent with strict orders to bring Roshan Akhtar, accompanied by his mother with all care and respect. He was to be mounted on an elephant, and in all dignity and honour was to be taken out of the capital and brought to Agra.
   Qasim, (p.126) supports this statement.
   The author of Tariikh-i-Ali (p.66- a) says that it was Cutilbul Yulk who himself brought Roshan Akhtar from Delhi. This is not correct.
   * The Pargana Bidyapur is four miles west of Tajpur, a Tahsil in Agra division. Irvine is of opinion that Tajpur was the place of enthronement. Irvine, vol.II p.1.

His relations with the Saiyid brothers:

Muhammad Shah wore the imperial crown at a time when there was still a desire for peace and respect for constituted authority in the provinces. The Central Government though weakened royal authority was still respected and inspired awe among the people. The prospects for a long and successful rule were not so dark as later when the authority of the Emperor was eclipsed by the ambitious wrangling for power of the various political parties. The noblemen who now directed the affairs of the state had got their supremacy recognised by all throughout the dominions. They continued to grow in power behind the pompous frontage of the throne which they could use to further their own interest.

Muhammad Shah possessed neither the talents of a soldier, nor the abilities of statesman. The best part of his youth had passed in the prison. Untrained in the arts of civil administration, and in the conduct of military operations, he proved utterly unfit to face new problems or to settle the old ones. A handsome youth with refined manners and easy disposition, his impulses were generous, and trustful and he was averse to cruelty and prone to forgiveness. His hands were unstained with blood, and no act of cruelty stands out against him. In him the love of ease and excessive sensuality encouraged by the affection of his mother and the temptations of the ladies of the harem had dwarfed his intellect and impaired his physical powers. His simplicity and ignorance of state craft soon rendered him a slave to his attendants who gradually completely dominated him.

1. Tarih-i-Find p. 469.
   T.M. p. 185.
   K.K. p. 840.
mansabdar of 5,000/5,000 and held his office in his own house.

**COMPROMISE WITH RAJA JAI SINGH:**

The secret of their success lay in the weakness of the monarch whom they had installed on the Mughul throne, and their alliances with factions that had gained power and prestige in the recent times. Maharaja Ajit Singh, Raja Shahu, and Churaman Jat had already been won over; the Mughul group was kept at bay; Raja Jai Singh, and Shabella Ram, the two faithful partisans of Farrukh-Siyar were still unsubdued and had now to be dealt with.

Raja Jai Singh who had been ordered by the short sighted Emperor, Farrukh-Siyar, to quit the capital on the 3rd Rabi II, (22nd February 1719) had remained in Sarai Sahil to watch the sanguine spectacle on the fateful morning of the 9th Rabi II, 1131 A.H. (28th February, 1719) finally left Delhi for Amber in sullen dejection. Remorselessly betrayed by one in whom he had placed his faith and to whom he had clung to the last, Raja Jai Singh failed in his purpose of gaining a position of preeminence at the imperial court and in Rajputana as Raja Ajit Singh occupied. But the injuries of the past and the fears of the future led him to make use of the popular discontent in the capital against his sworn enemies. A man of wide vision and in intrepid spirit, Jai Singh founded his hopes on the over-thrown of the present regime, a work which was easy some months before when he had persuaded in vain his patron sovereign to act on his suggestion.

1. Miratul Haqaiq. f. 163 (b)
Two risings, one headed by Mitar Sen who installed Neku-Siyar as Emperor in Agra on 29th Jamadi II, (18th May, 1719) and the other by Shaista Khan, maternal uncle of Farrukh-Siyar at Delhi in the last week of Rajab 1131 A.H. (1st week of June, 1719) were the outcome of the conspiratorial designs of Jai Singh. Immaturity of the plan, and the disunity among the conspirators were the chief causes of the failure of these rebellions. As Nizamul Mulk did not join them and Chabella Ram remained engrossed in the suppression of Jaswant Singh in his own province, Jai Singh could not march further than Toda Tank, which he had reached at the head of 9 or 10 thousand horsemen, accompanied by the zamindars whom he had provoked to take up arms against the government.

1. Neku-Siyar, the eldest surviving son of Prince Akbar, the fourth son of Alamgir had lived in Akbarabad fort as State prisoner since the rebellion of his father (January, 1681). He was now 40 years, and passed nearly 32 years in prison. He was raised to the throne on 18th May, 1719, at Agra by one Mitar Sen, who lived with the Prince in the fort and had acquired much influence through his contact with Husain Ali Khan. Mitar Sen was made the wazir with the title of Raja Birbal, and the rank of 7,000 horse. He had met Raja Jai Singh and discussed with him terms of collaboration. After his accession Neku-Siyar made overtures for peace which were rejected. Ghairat Khan and Haider Quli Khan were already there besieging the fort, Husain Ali Khan also reached the spot on 3rd July, 1719, and the garrison surrendered the fort. Mitar Sen committed suicide, and Neku-Siyar was brought as a prisoner but pardened by the Saiyid brothers. K.K. pp. 327-37.

2. Shaista Khan, the maternal uncle of Farrukh-Siyar, raised the banner of revolt against the Saiyids at Delhi in league with Jai Singh whom he kept informed of all affairs. But on 10th June, 1719, his mansion was stormed and all his properties plundered. Other nobles who were in alliance with him left Delhi and joined Jai Singh. They were Ruhulla Khan, Tahavvar Khan and Salamat Khan. K.K. pp. 631-32.

Revolt of Raja Chabella Ram and peace made with Girdhar Bahadur.

Peace was hardly patched up with Jai Singh, when the rumblings of a new measure rose ominously in the east. There the standard of insurrection was unfurled by Raja Chabella Ram Nagar, the governor of Allahabad. With the Saiyid brothers, against whom he now resolved to measure his strength, the Raja had shared the sufferings and hardships in the battle of Agra (10th January, 1713) which decided the fate of Jahandar Shah and raised Farrukh-Siyar to the throne. But of the fruits of this hard-won victory he found a little share. Saiyid Abbassi-Abdul Qutbululk did not agree to his appointment as the Diwan of Khalsa, for which the Emperor insisted in vain. His devotion to Farrukh-Siyar, his mental superiority and his political and military experience, had excited in him hopes of rapid promotion in the government, if he could manage to stay in the imperial court as a minister. Apprehensive lest he might constitute a danger by strengthening the hands of the Emperor, in the court, the Saiyid brothers cut him off from the main spring of politics, and sent him to Akbarabad, as governor. There he was soon

1. Raja Chabella Ram Nagar, son of Mehta Bhagwati Prasad, belonged to the respectable family of Nagar Brahman, and was born at Agra. His brother Raja Daya Ram had died in war of succession among the sons of Bahadur Shah in 1712. He was a protege of Azimsh Shah. When Farrukh-Siyar proclaimed himself Emperor, he was then Faujdar of Chahla Karra Manikpur, and though pressure was put on him by Prince Aazuddin, son of Jahandar Shah, he rejected overtures and joined the standard of Farrukh-Siyar. In the battle of Agra he played a conspicuous part, and later on was raised to high power by the new Emperor. Raja Girdhar Bahadur was the son of Raja Daya Ram, M.H. P.

2. Irvine. pp. 283-84. (Vol. I.)
There he was soon replaced by Samsam-ud-Daulah and henceforth he maintained an attitude of sullen hostility to the Delhi faction.

After some time he was appointed the governor of Allahabad with the command of Pirawar, Khairabad and Cosh. But conditions were not peaceful there. The rajas and zamindars of the region, instigated and supported by the two ministers, were creating disturbances by rising into open revolt against the governor. Inspite of his costly disproportionate resources to those of the insurgents, the governor succeeded to overcome them.

The reports of his triumph over the rebels and the knowledge of the Raja's intention to expose the cause of Nahu-Siyan, exasperated the brothers and moved them to send armies against him at Allahabad. Meanwhile letters were addressed to the Raja by the minister assuring him the safety of his person, and the security of his possession. He was urged to dispell fears and suspicions, and attend the court where the confirmation of his appointment would be made. He was further informed that an addition of 500 zat had been made in the mansab of his nephew, Sirhcar Bahadur, and he (Raja) could send him if he himself was unable to come. But neither conciliatory letters nor military threat could persuade him to forgo his legitimate claim to his possessions or yield to the will of the dictators. He like a brave man girded his lions to vindicate the honour by an appeal to the sword. After making preparation adequate to the importance of the issue, and entrusting the defence of

1. About his resources he wrote that if income was one thousand the expenditure was three thousand. Ajaib ul Afaq. pp.73-76.
Bal Mukand Nama. Letter No.3 pp. 22-25.
fort to the veteran Girdhar Bahadur, he came out from the city
and pitched his standard on the plain to withstand the onset
of the imperial forces. But destiny imposed its fatal arbitra-
tion before the clash of arms could settle the dispute. Raja
Chabella Ram received a severe attack of paralysis from which
he never recovered and died in November, 1719.

Girdhar Bahadur now took up the unfinished work of his
deceased uncle. That daring youth, started the task of fortifi-
cations by digging up channel filled with waters from the
Ganges and the Jumna, and in front of it built up several small
earth/en forts. Inside the forts granaries and arsenals were
built and along its ramparts engines of war were placed. On the
road running along the bank of the rivers, and through which
the royal treasury sent by Murshid Quli Khan, governor of Bengal,
was to pass, an officer at the head of considerable force was
posted to seize the money. Thus the enthusiasm of the soldiers
which, on the death of Chabella Ram, was damped, was rekindled
by the vigor and skill displayed by their present leader, and
by the knowledge of the impregnable character of their resources.

Early the Saiyid brothers had attempted compromise with
him by promising him the Subedari of Cuddh including the Faujdar
of Lucknow and Gorakhpur, if he surrendered Allahabad fort.

1. Balmukand Nama p. 106.
Karwar f. 178 (b).
The transports of joy on the news of their enemy's death so
much delighted them that drums were beaten for its announce-
ment. Husain Ali Khan, in his usual strain expressed that his
grief was that the head of the Raja was not beheld by the
people from one city to the other on the point of spear.

According to Qasim the treasure had been seized by the men
of Girdhar Bahadur. Shiv Das on the other hand states that
it was still at Patna. It had 90 lakhs of rupees. In the light
of letters to Murshid Quli Khan by the minister, the second
statement is correct. Balmukand Nama.
This offer was rejected on the pretext of performing the formal obsequies of his uncle, which will take one year and he will have to stay in Allahabad for the period.

The ministers replied to the refusal of their overtures by sending yet another military expedition consisting of 50 thousand soldiers and heavy artillery under the supreme command of Haider Quli Khan accompanied by other officials.

Reaching Allahabad, he surveyed the situation and opened operations with determination. The fierce fighting waged on for several days, in which the defence lines of the enemy were shattered and they were driven to the very walls of the fort. Despair seized Girdhar and he feared lest in keeping up the contest anymore, the chances of bargaining might be irretrievably lost. Worn down and disheartened, he sued for peace.

The officials present on the scene informed the ministers of the change in the conduct of the rebel. Saiyid Abdullah Jutbul Nulk, wrote to Shah Ali Khan that His Majesty, out of magnanimity and mercy pardoned the rebel's guilt, and the subah of Oudh with the Faujdari of its adjacent district was restored to him, the Raja should be asked to leave the fort for his new province after handing over the charge of the civil and military

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1. T.M. p. 188.  
K.K. Kamvar, p. 172 (b)  
The original name of Haider Quli Khan was Muhammad Raza. In the reign of Farrukh-Siyar he was made Divan of Deccan, with the title of Haider Quli Khan. In the first year of Muhammad Shah's reign he was exalted to the post of Mîr Atash. He had taken part in the campaign against Hitor Sen at Agra.  
officers of Allahabad province. To Haider Quli Khan orders were sent to resume his efforts to reach adjustments with Girihar and satisfy him that the sanad would be sent later on. If the latter still persisted in his obstinacy, coercion was the only recourse left to them. Haider Quli Khan failed in his efforts to assure the Raja of the sincerity of the promises made to him. Negotiations broke down, and hostilities were commenced anew. Outraged at this development, the minister, who was expecting an early settlement of the issue, again wrote to Haider Quli Khan to adopt drastic measures against the rebel, and he with his followers should either be killed or arrested.

Husain Ali Khan duly aware of the magnitude of the danger that faced the government, declared his intention of marching with his army to Allahabad and curb the presumptions of the rebel. But Qutul Mulk distrusted his brother and feared his ambition. He wanted to appropriate himself the spoils of the fort as he had done after the defeat and surrender of Hitar Sen at Agra. A dispute arose between the two brothers as to who should be leader of the expedition. Saiyid Abdullah argued that the capture of Agra fort was to his credit, now Allahabad should be his sphere for earning a military reputation. As a result of the advice of Raja Ratan Chand who did not like these dissensions, Husain Ali gave way.

1. Bal Mukand Nama letter No.4.
2. Ibid. letter No.9.
* Shiv Das. p.77.
5. K.K. p. 3/5.
6. Ibid.
Meanwhile Girdhar Bahadur suggested the name of Raja Ratan Chand, as an agreeable representative of the government for the government interview. The appeal after mutual consultations was accepted by the ministers. The Raja who was honoured with a robe of honour, and at the head of 12 thousand horse and foot, and 60 large guns started on 3rd April, 1720, for Allahabad. There he met Girdhar Bahadur, presented him gifts and carried on negotiations with him in a cordial atmosphere.

The terms of peace offered by Raja Ratan Chand to Girdhar were, the government of Cudh with all the divisions dependent thereon, and the right to appoint all the military and civil subordinate officers. He was also to get a gift of thirty lakhs of rupees, payable from the Bengal remittance, together with a jewelled turban ornament, a special dress of honour and an elephant from the Emperor. Girdhar Bahadur accepted these terms, and the final settlement was made on oath.

**Conflict between Nizamul Mulk and Saiyid Brothers.**

Things ill begun seldom end well. The peace that was made with Raja Jai Singh and Raja Girdhar Bahadur brought to the Saiyid brothers no permanent relief. New dangers long apprehended were nowhere to engage their attention and try their skill and diplomacy.

Of all their rivals, Nizamul Mulk and Muhammad Amin Khan towered high as powerful and influential leaders of the Mughuls.

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4. Ibid.  
7. Qasim. p. 133.  
8. Kamwar. f. 194 (a)
Heroes of many a battle under Alamgir in the Deccan, they had besides their courage and skill, political wisdom and diplomacy. The Saiyids of Barha looked raw youths before these commanding personalities and they rightly feared their opposition. But the Mughul leaders had lost much of their influence at the Imperial Court during years that followed Alamgir's death. As previously noticed during the reigns of Bahadur Shah and Jahandar Shah, Nizamul Mulk and Muhammad Amin Khan had found no chance of dominating the affairs of the government undisputedly, as they had not supported the cause of these monarchs in the wars of succession. And when they deserted Jahandar Shah and joined the standards of Farrukh-Siyar in the battle of Agra (10th Jan: 1713), the Saiyid brothers had come out as strong rivals to block their way to power and prosperity. During this period new favourites and new factions had appeared to dominate the political stage, much to the chagrin of these Mughul leaders. Their followers likewise were overshadowed and cast into the background by the new band of royal servants who divided the wealth and offices of the kingdom among themselves. The Mughuls and the old servants, stripped of their ranks and possessions, lived in obscurity and isolation.

Nizamul Mulk, as governor of Malwa was devoting his time and attention to improve the conditions of the province, disturbed by local and external disorders. During the period that intervened between the death of Alamgir and the accession of the present Emperor, Malwa witnessed the rise of Rajput princes, the struggle of Kota-Bundi States, the attempts of the Marathas to establish themselves beyond Narmada, the rapid changes of the governors who more often sent their own deputies in the province. As a result, the zamindars and Faujdars became self-
charges of keeping Marahamat Khan in his service, and other charges relating to the removal of a zamindar in Pargana Talam and some disputes about land, and asked him (the vakil) to report to his master the conversation. In his defence Nizamul Mulk argued that Marathas meance necessitated the increase in men and material, the Amirul Umra should have examined the reports in the light of his recently-acquired experience while passing through this troubled area; and his previous record of loyalty was a sufficient refutation of motives imputed by professional trouble-makers, the news writers, for had it ever been his intention to rise against them, no better opportunity could present itself than that afforded by Neku-Siyar who was in arms and had appealed to him for his succour.

The cogency of these reasons did not prove efficacious. It rather heightened his suspicion and jealousy of Nizamul Mulk. Husain Ali Khan had already taken the bit between his teeth, and nothing was to stop him from striking his adversary down. Nizamul Mulk was soon deprived of his present post, although a list of other provinces including Agra, Allahabad, Multan and Burhanpur was put to him from which he was to choose any one as his future charge. This was a difficult matter, and the choice lay between open revolt and abject surrender. Husain Ali was satisfied that in any case victory would be his. If his enemy was not going to be inveigled into acquiescence, military operations would break him. Accordingly Dilawar Ali Khan was selected for the task. Still the struggle between Phim Singh and Salam Singh was in its throes, and Dilawar Ali Khan had been sent to punish the latter for his alliance with Raja Jai Singh.

After his success over Salam Singh, Dilawar Ali Khan with a force of 15 thousand, including the contingents of Phim Singh Nada and Jag Singh Varai, was awaiting further instructions from the centre.

Mohammed Shah was a mere figure-head grossly robbed of his prerogatives and princely honours, and reduced to a state of semi-confinement within the walls of the palace. All power rested with his protectors and their partisans who had been placed in key positions. In utter helplessness he brooded over the loss of his freedom; but his knowledge of the fact that had overtaken his predecessors prevented him from making a move that might end in disaster. His mother, however, was anxious to find a way out of this predicament. The factious rivalry awakened new hopes and she was quick to notice Mughul discontentment and use those officers as pawns in her dexterous manoeuvres to overthrow the enemy.

The Mughuls who thought themselves to be the architects of the Empire, were now deprived of position, they were entitled to possess by birth, merit and service, their offices were taken, their possessions confiscated, their influence undermined and they lived a life of poverty and distress. To their disgust Ratan Chand, hated and despised by all, was supreme and interfered even in religious affairs. Khaifi Khan writes; "When the representatives of the house of Timur lost the control of the state, the great and the small of all classes were distrusted with the arrogance of the two brothers, and by the fact of the general control of civil and revenue affairs being under the

direction of Ratan Chand. For excepting men of Barha and the shop-keeping class, no one found any favour. The nobility of every province carried on their existence in disgrace and distrust."

They recognised a common danger and resolved upon joint efforts to meet it. Muhammad Amin Khan, the head of the Kughul party in the capital was serving as second Bakshi since his reconciliation with the two brothers. He was an accomplished hypocrite, post-master of double game and a greedy schemer. He hated the Saiyids and all those who stood around them. He maintained that birth and talents should be the only standards for one's supremacy, not the temporary pre-eminence acquired only by the change of circumstances. He was proud of his race which he believed, could only be the proper agency for running the Kughul government. His insatiable craving after power and restless scheming disposition were equally to the task of restoring the old set-up of things. "Pride, courage and honour, continually spurred this lion-hearted noble to make an end of this state of things and to take revenge."

He assured Muhammad Shah that Mizarul Hulk was making preparation of war against the Saiyids and the Emperor would be soon freed from his bondage. Mizarul Hulk was a divinely appointed agent to uproot the foundations of the Saiyid's ascendency, and punish the wrongs done to the house of Timur, and success, will crown his efforts if he was inspired with hope and assured of support in the hour of need. The Emperor and his mother on the suggestion's and instigation of Muhammad Amin Khan wrote

letters to the Nizam urging him to break the bondange under which he (Muhammad Shah) was living a life of misery and dependence. One of the letters informed him "that the constraint used by the Saiyids was so strict that he had only liberty to go to service on Sabbath, and that he had no power of giving any orders; that the Saiyids, in their futile scheming, projected, after settling the affairs of Neku-Siyar and Girdhar, to get rid of him (Nizam) Shah and to do as they pleased; that they (Muhammad/and his mother) had full reliance on him (Nizamul Mulk), that he would not fail in the loyalty which his ancestors had ever exhibited." In another letter, Muhammad Shah advised him not to march to the north and attend the courts, but to stay on in the south and increase his power. There was a probability that hearing the news of his northward march the Saiyids would either send their forces or would themselves start to check his advance. He further informed him that an imperial Farman had been sent to Husain Afghan of Qasur, promising him mansab, title and subedari of Lahore, on the condition that he (Husain Afghan) should fight with Abdul Samad Khan, the governor, and kill him. In the same way, they were making plans to destroy him (Nizamul Mulk) and Muhammad Amin Khan.

2. Ibid.
3. Husain Khan Afghan, the Faujdar of Qasur, was for long in arms against the governor of Lahore, Abdul Samad Khan Bahadur Dler Jang. Early attempts of the governor to suppress him had been frustrated. Now encouraged by the central government he set out with a force of 10,000 thousand horse (Kamwar puts the number as 20,000.175,b) and met the governor's army at a distance of 20 kos from Qasur. The engagement was bloody and decisive. The battle took place on 6th Jamadi I, 1132 A.H. in which Husain Ali Khan was killed, and his army melted away. The notable loss on the side of the governor was of Karim Quli Khan, his Amil. T.M. (p.175); Kamwar (f. 175 b, 176 a). K.K. (p.861); Qasim (p.142).
Nizamul Mulk's victory over Dilawar Ali Khan.

Inspite of the threat of war Nizamul Mulk refused to leave Malwa, for it was the time of harvest, his only hope to meet the expenses of the army. Chagrined and mortified beyond limits, Husain Ali Khan gave way to his rage by upraising his elder brother for his lack of courage and far-sightedness. Dilawar Ali Khan was urged to cross Chambal with 70 thousand horses. Alam Ali Khan was asked to appear on the bank of Narmada with all the fighting units from the Deccan while mace-bearers were sent with imperial Farmans to bring Nizamul Mulk to the court. Intelligence of these transactions had reached Nizamul Mulk through his agent at the court, Diyanat Khan, who urged him not to waste time but act quickly. His relations and followers were ready to hazard all for him, but Nizamul Mulk was hesitant to take up arms at this moment. His traditional loyalty to the imperial cause, his aversion to internecine wars and his doubts as to the issue made him think before he took his final step. But it was now the question of honour and that of his family. "I have lived," said the Nizam to Muhammad Ghiyas Khan, "respected from the days of the late Emperor Alamgir, and for the few more days that may be vouchsafed me, I trust I may be saved from dishonour." Besides, he claimed that it was his duty as a loyal subject to save the honour of the Emperor. He, therefore, resolved "to resist his antagonists even if they might bring all Hindustan against him."

He turned to the Deccan from where he could fight against his enemies.

1. T.M. p. 194.
Siyar p. 47.
4. Ahwal. f. 194 (a)
Nizamul Mulk, amidst torrential rains, set out from Ujjan, made three marches towards Agra, and then turned back suddenly on Mandsaur, and leaving it on 23rd April, 1720, he again reached Ujjan in a short time. From there the army followed the road to Kayath, a village on the way of Sirónj, and turning to south he finally crossed the Narmada at the ford of Akbarpur on 8th May, 1720. He commanded an army of nearly 14 thousand horse and foot, which included such persons of approved fidelity, like Abdul Rahim Khan, Riyat Khan, Qadir Dad Khan, Mutawassil Khan, Inayat Khan and others.

His entry into the Deccan marked the beginning of an unbroken series of triumphs over his enemies. He captured Asirgarh, famous for its impenetrability. This he secured by bribing the garrison, as he could not afford a long siege. On 20th May Marahamat Khan entered the fortress, and there Nizam Mulk left his two sons, Ghaziuddin Khan, and Mir Ahmad Nasir Jang and spare baggage. From Asirgarh Nizamul Mulk directed Ghiyas Khan to capture the city of Burhanpur. Muhammad Anwar Khan, the Faujdar, assisted by a force sent by Alam Ali Khan, tried to resist Ghiyas Khan, who lay encamped in Lal Bagh, but the resentment of the citizens and the desertion of other officials foredoomed his cause to failure, compelling him to sue for peace. He made an agreement with Ghiyas Khan and handed over the city to him. On 24th May, 1720, Anwar Khan, and Anwarullah Khan, Diwan of the province, along with all the officials and

3. Ahwal f. 157(b).
the leading citizens presented themselves before Nizamul Mulk who had arrived there the day before. The occupation of Asirgarh and Burhanpur had raised Nizamul Mulk to the height of power and fame. To his regular forces were added army contingents under banners of different hues; his already considerable resources were increased and his noble treatment of the family of Saiyid Saifuddin Ali Khan won him the admiration of friend and foe. This accession of power and prestige of Nizamul Mulk filled the hearts of the Saiyids with fear and jealousy. Husain Ali Khan now decided to go in person against the Nizam. But Saiyid Abdullah Qutbul Mulk dissuaded him from hasty action and advised him to watch further developments, for everything was not lost, and still the losses could be retrieved by tactful handling of the situation. Alam Ali Khan and Raja Shahu, were on the spot, and they would find no difficulty in punishing the rebel. Thus letters were written to Alam Ali Khan, Raja Shahu and Balaji Vishwanath. Alam Ali Khan was informed that imperial Farmans had already been sent to the various officers of the province, and he should with their help and in collaboration with Shankarji Malhar prevent the Nizam for establishing his footing anywhere in the Deccan.

1. Local zamindars, Afghan chiefs and Marathas contingents from Kolahpur under Chander San Jadav had joined him. Shah Nama Deccan (p.117). Qasim (p.136). The mother of Saiyid Saifuddin Ali Khan, brother of the minister and the paymaster had arrived in Burhanpur when the city had passed into the control of the Nizam. She was now on her way to Delhi. The news of this perturbed much, and she, in order to save the honour of her family, offered jewels and money to the Nizam. But he refused to accept this, and conferred robe of honour on the messenger Muhammad Ali, and sent him back with some baskets of fruits for the children. He ordered one of his officers to escort the family upto the river Narmada with a force of 200 horsemen. K.K. (pp. 855). , T.M. (p203).
2. Ahwal f. 157(b).
3. Ibid.
Succour will be sent and Husain Ali Khan would also come.

Acting on these instructions, Alam Ali Khan enlisted new troops by making liberal grants to Faujdars and the Zamindars. He at the head of large army of nearly 30 thousand, set out from Aurangabad on 7th June, 1720. His plan of military operations was to join Dilawar Ali Khan who was also marching southward, and crush the Nizam. Dilawar Ali Khan with a force of 40,000 horses, and such notable chiefs as Raja Bhim Singh Hada, Gaj Singh and Bost Muhammad Rohilla had crossed Narmada on 6th June, 1720 and advanced as far as Hussainpur, while Nizamul Mulk was in Burhanpur. They had hoped that Nizamul Mulk would shut himself in the fortress of Asirgarh, and as he would not have adequate provisions to hold out for long, his reduction would be an easy affair.

The Nizam first persuaded Dilawar to refrain from the bloodshed of his co-religionists, but his haughty disposition now inflamed by taunts of Husain Ali Khan who accused him of cowardice, spurred him to reject the advice and plunge himself in the war. He wrote a very harsh letter which brought tears to the eyes of Nizamul Mulk. After sending his family, elephants

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   Tarikh-i-Hind p. 475.
   K.K. p. 875.
   Ahwal f. 11(b)
   Swaneh Deccan f. 93(a)
   Shiv Das. p. 81.
   Qasim p. 138.
4. Ahwal f. 162(a)
5. Shiv Das. p. 82.
6. Ibid.
   Qasim p. 97.
   Warid p. 545.
   Ahwal f. 162(a)
and heavy baggage to Asirgarh, Nizamul Mulk started from Burhanpur on 15th June and after one week reached Ratanpur. Thence he moved out after four days to Pandhar, a hilly country, 32 miles from Burhanpur, and taking cover behind a stream that separated his camp from the position of Dilwar Ali Khan who was already there, he arranged his troops in battle order and concealed artillery men behind it. On 19th June 1720, the armies engaged in battle. The forces on either side were well-matched in gallantry and courage, but discipline and skill were the special merits of Nizam's army which in the end won victory for him. When Dilawar Ali Khan led an attack in person and crossed the stream he was shot dead by a bullet. Rao Bhim Singh and Raja Gaj Singh after intrepid charge also perished on the field of battle. The total loss in killed and wounded was four thousands and 12 thousands respectively. The shattered columns saved themselves from annihilation by flight from the bloody field into Malwa, leaving enormous baggage behind them to be

1. "What manly virtue is there, nay is not a death-blow to honour, thus to flee from death and for the sake of saving this platry life, to climb so many mountains and cross so many deserts? Would it not be well to confide in the all powerful and come out to meet the writer, so that side by side we might return to the Presence, where exceeding exertion will be made for the pardon of that exalted one. Otherwise, be thoroughly understood, this slave at the head of 20,000 horse thirsting for blood, follows like a wind that brings a destructive tempest; and if imitating a deer of the plains you escape and flee to the mountains, this pursuer will, like a panther, spring on your back and make wet the teeth of desire with the blood of his enemy."

Warid. p. 545.

2. Ahwal, f. 159(b)

3. Ibid.

4. Shiv Das, pp. 82-83. He puts the number of the killed and wounded at 12 thousand respectively.

Ahwal, f. 164 (b). According to him the number of the killed was 45,000.

Sawaneh Deccan F. 93 (a).
plundered by the victors. Fifty elephants, two thousands horses, camels and oxens fell into the hands of the Nizam's soldiers. Drums were beaten to announce the victory.

Defeat and death of Alam Ali Khan.

The Saiyid brothers read reports of this overwhelming loss with great anxiety. The flower of their army had perished; a great veteran had been killed, and family honour besmirched. Their anguish was deep, their concern extreme. Their self-confidence was shattered; their counsels confounded and their moves distracted.

Husain Ali Khan, however, again, expressed his resolve to march to the south either alone or accompanied with the Emperor. But before he could march, he was first to ensure the safety of his family at Aurangabad. To gain this objective the subedari of the Deccan was conferred on Nizamul Mulk and he was requested in a private letter "to furnish his family with an escort and see that they were not molested on the way." His appointment as governor of the south strengthened his position. The change in

1. Ibid.
   K.K. p. 882.
   Ahwal. f. 159(b)
   Shiv Das p. 75.
3. T.M. p. 75.
   Shiv Das. p. 84-85.
4. Husain Ali Khan had left his family in Deccan when he had proceeded to the north. They were still in Aurangabad when disaster overtook Dilawar Ali Khan and his army. Nizamul Mulk assured the Amirul Umra about his family in his reply in these words. "By God's aid I will soon reach Aurangabad from where I will forward your family and your other belongings with greatest care." (Shiv Das p. 91). In his reply to the royal Farman he pleaded his innocence in leaving Malwa for Deccan and fighting against Dilawar Ali Khan and argued if the flames of the Maratha disorders were allowed to consume the suburbs of Aurangabad, not extinguished there and then, they could easily spread from Burhanpur to Malwa, and thus the imperial cause would be greatly jeopardised. Further the safety of Amirul Umra's family too was in danger. Then it was the rash conduct of Dilawar Ali Khan that compelled him to take up arms against him. Ma'sir-i-Nizami p. 52. Shiv Das p. 89-91.
office had carefully been announced by Nizamul Mulk who had
received the patent with due form and proper observance. His
days of wandering for safety and shelter had now passed away,
his rebellion had been condoned, and his status was legally
recognised. Nizamul Mulk sent to Alam Ali Khan a copy of the
royal Farman with the Qazi's seal along with his letter in which
he asked him, in the capacity of governor, to disband his troops
and march northwards with his family, and desist from fighting.

Alam Ali Khan was engaged in getting his artillery through
Fardapur in May 1720 to March and help Dilawar Ali Khan, when
the unwelcome news of his death was made known to him by the
2,000 fugitive from the vanquished host. The reports were con-
firmed by a letter of Husain Ali Khan, and later on by the
coffins of Dilawar Ali Khan and his relations sent by the Nizam.
Under the changed situation, the Maratha generals and his own
associates advised him to return to Aurangabad or go to Ahmadabad
and wait the arrival of Husain Ali Khan. In the meantime they
would harass the enemy by plundering his camp. The rash and
inexperienced youth thought it below his dignity to retire, and
continued his march to meet the enemy on the battle field.

Once again Nizamul Mulk asked Alam Ali Khan to refrain from
fighting and await the coming of Husain Ali Khan so that in his

2. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
   Shiv Das. p. 92.
   Sawaneh Deccan. f. 93(b)
   Ahwal. f. 165(b)
   Warid. p. 547.
presence the issue might be settled. According to Qasim Lahori, Nizamul Mulk had asked his uncles to prevail on the youth to put off the recourse to arms, and they wrote pressing letters to him. But the salutary advice did not commend itself to the ill-fated man. He had pinned his hopes on his grand army of thirty thousand, consisting mainly of the Afghans, whose support he had gained by a matrimonial alliance with the family of the late Daud Khan Panni, and the Maratha auxiliaries about 12,000 under the command of Peshwa Baji Rao. He, therefore, crossed Fardapur, and encamped at Talab Hartala, not far from Purna river, which flowed some 16 or 17 kos to the southeast of Burhanpur. His approach towards Burhanpur necessitated the defence of the city, where commotion prevailed among the people. Mutawassil Khan with six thousand horse was sent by the Nizam, and the captain after covering a distance of forty miles in one day succeeded in reaching there and allaying their apprehensions by making preparations for defence.

When Nizamul Mulk found that the youth was bent upon crossing swords with him, he came out from Burhanpur and pitched his camp at Hartla lake. But heavy rains rendered the ground unfit to stay there for long, and the Nizam moved out, crossed the river Purna with his whole army in the direction of Balapur district on 20th July, 1720, and encamped near Seogan, a village in Berar. There his army suffered privations due to the plundering of the Marathas and the interception of supplies by them.

3. Ibid.
When rains stopped for a while, generals were sent against the free-booters who were defeated and put to flight. Few marches from there brought the Nizam and his army to Balapur itself, and the place was selected for the action, as Alam Ali Khan, just after his departure from Hartla, had crossed the river and encamped. There on the 9th August, 1720, Nizamul Mulk ranged his army in order of battle at a distance of two or three kos from Balapur and on next day a fierce fighting ensued. The first charge, made by Alam Ali Khan’s vanguard of 14 to 15 thousand cavalry supported by artillery, was so irresistible that the centre of the Nizam’s army was thrown into disorder. Nurullah, brother of the commander of the Nizam’s army was killed; Yalburz Khan and Muhammad Ghiyas were wounded. But the tide of battle turned when his right and left divisions rolled onward and delivered furious attack on the ranks of Alam Ali Khan. Ghiyasuddin Khan, the commander of his artillery, Ghalib Khan and his Diwan Apaji, Shamsheer Khan, Saiyid Wali and Saiyid Alam Barha were killed, and others gave way before repeated onslaughts. Alam Ali Khan, wounded and worn-down persisted and fought with heroic courage till he was surrounded and killed by Iktisas Khan who cut off his head. He earned for him an honourable death and the history of the period has few parallels of the unflinching courage and matchless gallantry displayed by him in the campaign. But his reckless valour was

1. Ahwal, ff. 165(b), 166.  
Kamwar, f. 178(a)  
Sawaneh Deccan, f. 93(b)  
Qasim. p. 146.  
3. Ahwal f. 168 (a,b).  
Shiv Das p. 95.
a poor compensation to the coolness and judgment of a true general. Seventeen or eighteen chiefs of renown perished, besides large number of soldiers, Amin Khan, Umar Khan Turktaz Khan, Fida Khan and some other officers of the defeated army at once joined Nizamul Mulk. Shankraji, the captain in Maratha army, was wounded and taken prisoner. The whole baggage was plundered. Nizamul Mulk lost in killed only Saiyid Suleman and Sheikh Nurullah and in wounded besides above-mentioned Mutawassil Khan and Qadir Dad Khan. The victory over Alam Ali Khan made the Nizam undisputed master of the south. He now left for Burhanpur, and engaged in the business of the administration. Mubariz Khan was appointed governor of Hyderabad.

1. Ahwal. ff. 169(a); 178(a).
   Shiv Das pp. 96-97.
   Sawaneh Deccan. f. 93(b)
   Masir-i-Asafi. p. 106.
   Irvine Vol.II. pp. 47-50.